A WORD OF

EXHORTATION

TO OUR

SEPARATING BRETHREN

of whatever denomination, especially those commonly called

Anabaptists,

Beseeching them to stirre up their Hearts to an upright impartiall, and unbended considering of their Wayes, in order to their giving Glory to Truth and Peace, and to Taking hold of the strength of God, in this day of our own weakness.

The chief points, these four;

1. Twenty particulars, wherein our Brethren seem to have receded from Christ Crucified, or the Gospel.
2. Active obedience to Authority, in things, by God neither commanded nor forbidden; whether a Gospel duty?
3. Infant Baptisme, seeming to goe upon most short and clear grounds of Holy Scripture and sanctified reason.
4. Known set formes of Prayer, whether an help to devotion in congregations and families, much more proper and effectuall, then Prayer by the gift?

by G. F.

OXFORD,

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Beseeching them to stirre up their Hearts to an impartiall upright, and unbended considering *of their Wayes, in order to their giving Glory to Peace and Truth, and to Taking hold of the strength of God, in this day of our own weakness.*

BRethren, heartily beloved in the God of love, Christ Jesus: Hee, that now takes upon him, To be your monitour, is one that is peaceable in Israel; wisheth, with the Apostle, Grace, mercy and Peace may be multiplied unto you; seeks not yours, but you; acknowledges in you, and from his heart congratulates to you, these two most Christian dispositions, which heretofore Hee hath observed in most of you; namely, first, That generally ye doe fear an Oath and all open debosherry & Profaneſs. Secondly, That, when lately the right Church-Order and Constitution in this Land, through the mistake of the times, was either destroyed or brought into contempt and disrepute, somewhat neere a destruction, and nothing of any worth set up in steed of it (as indeed nothing of any worth, but that it self, could be set up) *Ye* yet would not be contented to live *at large*, and out of all both reall and seeming Church Order, as *many* did. These dear Brethren, are two such believing qualifications, namely, strict living, and great devotion to Discipline, That would ye now, *with these*, conform and apply your selves (through the power of grace and mercy) to the established way of this Nation; The advantage, ye might hereby bring to the truth of the Gospel, to the peace of Christendome, and to the eternall welfare both of

your ſelves and of others, would be ſuch, as no conceit can aforehand ſufficiently make out and declare.

To the end therefore, ye may thus (through Grace) bleſſe both your ſelves and others, & that the God of Order may love you the Sons of Order, yet more and more; Hee I verily believe; hath ſtirred up my Spirit, to lay before you thoſe convictions of the un-Evangelicallneſs of your way, that to me truly ſeem utterly unteſtiable. For judge, Brethren, even the meaneſt of you, whether that way can poſſibly be the right, which ſeems to have all theſe un-Chriſtian things, moſt truly charged upon it; namely,

Firſt, That ye do ſtrike in with the Papiſts, in the moſt venomous and un-Chriſtian point of all, namely, Their judging and condemning all other, or, their holding all other Chriſtians beſides themſelves, to be in ſtate of damnation; and, ſeparating from them accordingly. Thus doe the Papiſts; thus alſo doe ye. But that in ſo thinking and doing, both of you, doe both doe and think clean contrary to Chriſt Crucified, or, the Goſpel.

Secondly, Your rejecting of the Three Creeds.

Thirdly, Your uncharitable affirming all the Miniſters of England, to be deceivers, Impoſters, &c.

Fourthly, Your counting all, or moſt Societies of Chriſtians, beſides your ſelves, to be the Revelation-Babylon: And to this purpoſe in your *Arrowes againſt Babylon*, making, *quickly*, *ſhortly*, and, *the time is at hand* (expreſſions in ſundry places of that Book) to ſignifie a Tract of time, reaching our times and even to the very end of the World; contrary not onely to the *Truth*, but alſo to the *Scripture uſe* of the Word, as well, as of *all other* Books and Languages beſide.

Fifthly, Your Urging People to judge for themſelves in controverted *Points*; which yet by Gods Word, are left to the Rulers gather'd together in a Council, *Heb.* 13. 17. Compared with *Act.* 15.

Sixthly, Your ſlighting of Prayer and Praiſe and of the word diſtinctly read, in the Aſſemblies, as a *Part of Worſhip*.

Seaventhly, Your Endevouring to perſwade People againſt all ſenſe and Reaſon, That the whole Church, not onely in S. Cyprians and Tertullians, but alſo in Hyginus his time, was ignorant, whether the 50. or 100. years before, Infants were Baptized or no; When themſelves, or their Fathers, were ſome of thoſe Infants.

Eighthly, Your ſimulation, pretending to Preach *onely* by inſpiration, when ye your ſelves know well enough, that ye doe it, not without much uſe and ſtudy and conference, and thoſe other means and wayes, that other men take and uſe; And not onely by the preſent Incitations, Aſſiſtances, Suggeſtions and Inſpirations of the Spirit.

Ninthly, Your making all Infants uncapable of any room in the viſible Church, whileſt Infants. A piece of cruelty never heard of, from the beginning of the World, till, about 200. years agoe. (a)

Tenthly, Your making no difference at all, between the Infants of believers and of Infidels.

Eleventhly, Your making both Jewes and Gentiles to be now, (under Chriſt, and the Goſpel in a farre worſe eſtate, in reſpect of their Infants, then they were, under Moſes and the Law.

Twelfthly, Your allowing your ſelves in the violation of the 6. and 7. Commandements, by your endangering not the health onely, but Chaſtity alſo, of many, that ye dip.

Thirteenth. Your making nothing of the general cuſtome, uſage & practiſe of Chriſtians; clean contrary to what S. Paul does. For he, in that ſolemne debate about being covered, or uncovered in the Publick ſacred Aſſemblies, makes this his concluding, and, as it were, ſtabbing and unanſwerable argument; 1 Cor. 11. 16. *But if any man ſeem to be contentious, We have no ſuch cuſtome, nor the Churches of God.* For his meaning even in the opinion of Mr. Walter Craddock, is this; if with all this, that I have ſaid, the conten-

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tious among you will not be satisfied, but will in the Holy Assemblies, the Women be uncovered; and the Men covered; I have then to alleadge against them, this undeniable and unanswerable Argument, as being matter of known fact and practise, among all civil as well as Christian people; That no where is it in use for Men in the sacred Assemblies to cover themselves, and for Women to be uncovered. But most signally true is this, among Christians, There being not a Church of God any where that so does. Now to go by ones selfe, and in such things as these, to doe and practise in a clean different way from all other Christians, This sure must needs be very great Arrogance, singularity and self admiration at least; to say nothing of the unchastitableness, and Impiety thereunto conjoyned.

This, Brethren, seems to be the true minde and meaning of S. Paul in this place: And if so it be, then Judge ye, whether your slighting of the use and Practise of Christians, be an Apostolicall and Christian thing or no.

Fourteenth. Your restraining the manner of Baptizing to dipping: Whereas 1. The word signifies washing, effusion, or sprinkling, as well as dipping & immersion and dowsing over head and ears. 2. Christ hath not appointed the measure of Water, nor the manner of Washing; no more then Hee hath appointed in the Lords Supper, what quantity of Bread and Wine each must take. And as it would be but folly for any to think, that Men must needs fill themselves full of Bread and Wine, because it best signifies the fulness of Christ: so it is no better to say, We must be washed all over, because it best signifies our Burial with Christ, &c.

Fifteenth. Your teaching, that the Infants of *visible Church members under the Gospel* (or, That the Infants of *Christians*) ought to have their Baptisme *deferred*, till they come to Age; and, *doing* accordingly. For which your Doctrine and practise, there's no one word, or example in all the New Testament.

Sixteenth. Your deceaving your selves & others with Arguments à Testimonio Negative, thus, We read not in all the New Testament, that the Apostles Baptized any Infants; Therefore they Baptized none. An argument no better then these; We read not in all the New Testament, that the Apostles did *in* their Prayers lift up their eyes to Heaven; Therefore they never did so. That they did ever make use of the Lords Prayer. Therefore they never did use it, &c. *A non dicto ad non factum, non valet consequentia.*

Seaventeenth. Your turning Scripture affirmatives into exclusives, thus; The Apostles Baptized Men and Women come to Age; that is, say ye, They Baptized such *onely*, and none else. They Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus; that is, say ye, In the Name of the Lord Jesus *onely*, without mentioning Father or Holy Ghost, &c. Enarrations, no better then these; The Apostles *Ioh.* 21. Did eat Fish; therefore Fish *onely*, and never any Flesh. The Apostles did Preach the Gospel by Word of mouth; therefore *onely* by Word of mouth, and did never put it into writing. Blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed; therefore only such are blessed; Therefore S. Thomas, who by seeing the Wounds and Scars of the Lord Jesus after his Resurrection came to believe, was not a blessed believer, &c.

Eighteenth. Your comforting up your selves with passive obedience, that is, with suffering what the Law inflicts, when ye do not, what it commands. But consider, Brethren.

1. That in all the Book of God there cannot be any one believer *named*, nor any one Word of God *noted*, Warranting believers so much as to doubt or dispute, much lesse to disobey and condemne when once due Authority has interposed in things indifferent. So that not onely disobedience, but also mere passive obedience, *in this case*, is utterly un-scripturall, that is, such as has neither precept nor practise, nor Text nor fact, to warrant it throughout the whole Bible.

2ly. That, whereas some perhaps may think to evade the force of this Observation by distinguishing about Things indifferent clothed with their Circumstances, and Things Indifferent not-clothed with their circumstances; We may sure be bold to tell them afore-

hand, That, this distinction seemes but a mere Notion, or, a distinction without a difference; Because One part of It appeares to be entirely wanting, There being no particular things in Common life, but *are* clothed with Accidents and Circumstances. And therefore, If the soveraigne Powers may interpose in any indifferent Things, It must be in Things indifferent, clothed with their Circumstances, There being no other things at all, in Common life, for them to interpose in.

3ly. That Circumstances, though never so many, if some where in God's word they be not *certainely* forbidden, can never make any Thing Indiffirent, Not Indifferent, or Unfit and Unlawfull for the Soveraigne Magistrate to interpose in, whether by Prohibition or Injunction, as Hee sees Cause. (If indeed the Unseparable Accidents and Circumstances be *certainely* forbidden, The Thing it selfe we acknowledge to be forbiden to; Not in and of it selfe, but because of those sinfull forbidden Adherescencies. But no such, we are competently certaine, can be noted in any part of our Constitution. And for the faulty Executions, that be, These are the faults of men, not of the lawes.)

4ly. That St. *Pauls* Rules about not giving offence to weak Brethren, have place only in such things as the Christian Magistrate has not interposed in, neither by Prohibition, nor Injunction: For then no Christian Magistrate had determined one way or other; Not was there Any One *then*, so to doe. But *now*; (blessed be our God, who hath made so many Kingdomes of the world to be the Kingdomes of the Lord Jesus!) The case *now* is farre otherwise, as in many Soveraigneties besides, so particularly in these our Independent Kingdomes of England, Scotland and Ireland. Adde hereunto 1. That the Case, that St. *Paul* speaks to directly and particularly, namely, Things offered to Idols, is now no where to be met with in the Christian world. 2. That To make Rules for Conscience by Analogie or Proportions, *when therein* we have not the Ancient Church going before us, neither by knowne Practise, nor undoubted Canon, seemes a daring very dangerous and noway justifiable.

5ly. That the Word requires, not only Passive, but also Active Obedience from you, In all these *Scripture-undetermin'd* Matters, wherein the Magistrate by the word may interpose. Now that in setling the Outward worship of God, He may and ought to put in, seemes competently certaine, as otherwise, so especially from 1 *Chron.* 25. *vers.* 1. 2. 3. and 2 *Chron.* 29. 30: for in the former of these places recorded we have a Plaine Order or Act from King *David* and his Captains, that is, his Councill of Officers; not only from King *David*, the *man after* Gods own heart, but also from sundry *Ordinary* men, his Commission'd Officers: (The Great and most Legal Parliment not then sitting, this extemporary Convention of Officers serv'd the turne. How much more ought a most free, full and most deliberately-chosen Parliament satisfie us.) I say by this Authority an Ecclestical Order is no sooner emitted, *for prophesying*, that is, for praying, *with Harps, Psalteries, and Cymbals*; But presently It is most cheerfully and universally obeyed. The like submission also we find in the other place, given to the ordinance of *Hezekiah* and his Princes for Common Prayer, or, in the literal words of the text, *for singing praise unto the Lord*, as we now are appointed to doe by our King, his Princes and Parliament, *in the words of David and of Asaph the Seer*: for the very next words are; *And they sang prayses with gladness*, in these formes, *and they bowed their heads and worshipped*.

6ly. That if Ye suffer never so patiently and meekly, when Ye should have obeyed Actively, sinne yet doth lye at the doore and upon the Conscience. Because Impossible it is, that corporal outward suffering should be any expiation of Inward soule-sinne.

7ly. That, If ye suffer as Busy bodies in other mens matters, then can ye not be innocent; nor, by the Gospel rule, take any comfort at all in your sufferings. For, when we undertake to Judge the laws, which thing belongs only to the law makers, are we not Busy-bodies in other mens matters?

8ly. That, It seemes to be the most hazardous and curious point (one of them) in all

all Christianity, Passively to Obey, without being guilty of some sinne or other: Because; Thereunto these two things are found to be of Absolute necessity. 1. That, we be Antecedently Innocent, that is, That We be sure, We neither doe deserve, nor have deserved our sufferings, by any our own Weakness or Wickedness. 2. That in our suffering, We sinne not against any point of Christian meekness and Patience; especially, That we speak not evill of the Power, By and under which we suffer; and, That we be so farre from grudging at our sufferings, and from desiring by any indirect meanes, To shift our selves of our Cross, that we greatly rejoyce under it. Whether thus It be, or, when It comes to tryal, be like to be with You, Brethren, in all Respects, Your selves will make the Rightest estimate.

9. Adde hereunto, That in things by God in Scripture neither cleerly forbidden, nor cleerly commanded i. e. in things doubtful and Indifferent, The most conscientious and prudent Believers have ever counted the state of subjection, to be the hugely Happy state, that is, That the Supreme Magistrate and the laws should choose for them. For Hee, that hath the laws on his side, hath alwaies some thing of true religion to warrant him. And, Taking things upon trust from due Authority, or, Presumption in the behalfe of Authority is alwaies the safer: *Praesumptio est pro Authoritate Imponentis.* And subjects ought to judge in favour of the law: *Subditi tenentur in favorem legis judicare.* And many the like good Rules there are to this purpose.

Nineteenth. Your Contempt of deductions from Scripture; Contrary not only to the Practise of our Lord Himselfe, *Mat.* 2. 32: and of his Apostles, 2 *Cor.* 5. v. 14. 15. 1 *Tim.* 5. v. 17. 18: but also your own to; For, nothing either doe yee bring or can yee bring against Infant-Baptisme, It being in Scripture no where forbidden) save only certaine pretended deductions and Reasonings from Scripture words and Phrases. For instance, When 'ye say, Infants are not to be baptized, Yee draw it from Consequence, thus; Because there is no Command for it in your sense. When yee affirme the Covenant is not made with Believers and their seed *now*, as with *Abraham*; It's drawne by consequence, Because, say yee, *Abraham* is no natural Father to us, as to the Jews, and, Because that Covenant was a mixt Covenant, &c. When ye come to prove, Baptizing is by Plunging, ye argue by consequence, Because the word signifies it; Because they went where much water was, and went downe into the water, &c. And though yee greatly mistake in all these and many like consequences; Yet this is full *ad Homines*, or, *Against your selves*, who deny consequences to warrant Institutions, and yet have nothing to prove your own way, but what is by conseqence from *Scripture*.

Twentieth. Your wilfulness. Ye will not, ye say, be perswaded, that Infant-Baptisme hath any ground in Scripture, unless ye may see some Scripture in so many words affirming, That Infants *were* baptized, or, *ought* to be baptized. Is not this to say, Wee will not believe that God hath spoken any thing to this point, because, Hee hath not spoken it just as we would have had him? Or, We will not receive the *sense* and drift of the Scripture, because *the words* are not just such, as we thinke had been fittest? Or, We will not content our selves with *good grounds* for the Practise, because they are not just *such grounds*, as we would have? What is frowardness and meere wilfulness, if this be not? By the same Artifice, yee may reject the Trinity, the Lord's day, and indeed every thing of faith, that is not in *Scripture*, in *so* many and *such* words, as yee think had been best and fittest.

Upon these and other like considerations, It was, sure, That One (almost your owne) did yet, many yeares agoe, thus proclaime in print; The summe of All, writes Hee, that our Brethren have to say, though they make a great noyse in the world, is only this; That they can find in the New Testament no syllabical precept, or words of command in termes, saying, Goe, baptize Infants; Or, any full positive Example, where, it is recorded in so many words, that Infants were baptized. All that they say besides, is, to quarrel with our Arguments, and make shift to evade the strength of them; But this is the only Argument, and their All to speake on. For, however they talke of the Covenant, and Flesh-

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ly and ſpiritual ſeed, and ſome other matters; Yet this is their Great and moſt ſucceſſefull Argument. And yet it's whole ſtrength, is nothing but this falſe Principle, That no Conſequences from Scripture are *obliging*, or of *Divine Authority*. A principle carrying in the face of it, theſe three intolerable Abſurdities, (among ſundry other.)

1. Then, No One can ſpeak Divine Truth, but thoſe that ſpeak juſt the very expreſſions of Scripture.

2. Only the very letters and Syllables in the Bible ſhould be Scripure, not the ſenſe and meaning.

3. All Propheſyings (commonly called Preaching) All Enarrations, Opening, Applying and expounding of Scripture, ſhould be laid aſide, as Uſeleſs, if not Godleſs.

Adde to all this; That the Way of the Church of England, which ye have left, ſeemes to goe upon moſt cleere ſhort and certaine Grounds of Holy Scripture and ſanctified Reaſon, ſuch as theſe.

1. Infants may and ought to be entered into Covenant with God, as upon other Authorities, ſo particularly. *Deut.* 29. 11. Yee ſtand this day All of you--- Your Captaines - Your Elders--Your *Little Ones*, Your Wives--That thou ſhouldeſt *enter into Covenant* with the Lord thy God.

2. When we ſee the Lord Jeſus himſelfe counting childrens coming to Him *by* their believing freinds, to be *Very* coming unto Him; We have ſure ſufficient ground to believe, That He counts alſo their *Profeſſing* the faith *by* their believing friends, to be *Very* Profeſſing. *Phyſically* indeed or, According to the Phyſical, ſenſible or decretive Will of God, This Profeſſing is the act of the ſureties: But in Law-ſenſe or *Morally*, that is, According to his Moral, Intelligible, Legiſlative Will, It is the Childs own Act. Juſt as when a Father puts his Childs life into a living, and ties him to take ſuch or ſuch a man for his Land-lord, and to pay him ſuch or ſuch a Rent; and if he doe not, to forfeit his eſtate; if he doe, to enjoy it according to the Covenants: *Phyſically*, All this is the Fathers Act, but *Morally* and in the ſenſe of the law, The Child is poſſeſſed of the benefit, as well as of the Butthen, as much as if he had both-known what is done, and alſo had done it himſelfe. The Accomodation to our preſent buſineſſe is ſo obvious, that ſcarce Any ſure need to be holpen to doe it. For who ſees not that the ſureties, having Power and obligations from *Deut.* 29. 11. to enter the Child into Covnant with God, doe *indeed* ſo doe? Engage him to take Chriſt for his Land-lord as 'twere? To enjoy and hold of him, all the Benefits of the Goſpel, under the Rent of Faith and Repentance and the other Goſpel-Obſervations? If Hee doe not pay his Rent, to forfeit his living? If Hee doe, To enjoy it with ſurety and Higheſt comfort? &c. And boldly may the ſureties in the Child's behalfe, proteſt, That it is, His deſire to be baptized into the faith of Chriſt, becauſe every One may and ought to be preſumed not only *Conſenting to*, but alſo *deſirous of*, That, which is for his Good; As this his beeing entred into Covenant with his God, for certaine is No ſmall Good to every Child ſo enter'd; Unleſs haply we dare be ſo abſurd and wicked to affirme, That it is better to be *out* of Covenant with God, then *in*; And, To be *out* of the Boſome of the viſible Church, then *within* it. &c.

3. In the Inſtitution of *Chriſtian* Baptiſme ſome time before. *Joh.* 3. *verſ.* 22. 26: and *chap.* 4 *verſ* 1. 2: and in the Commiſſion *for* Baptizing, *Math.* 28. There is nothing againſt Infant Baptiſme; But rather, *Math.* 28. *verſ.* 19. 20. Roome purpoſely left for it, becauſe therein Diſcipling by Baptizing, that is, by Engaging into the Name of Father, Sonne and Holy Ghoſt, that is, unto the true Chriſtian Religion, is clearly ſet before Teaching. The words, theſe; Beeing gone therefore *Diſciple* all Nations, Baptizing them *into* the Name of the Father and of the Sonne and of the Holy Ghoſt, *Teaching* them to obſerve all things, whatſoever I have, &c.

4. The Baptizing of Growne Believers is ſo frequently noted in the New Teſtament, To ſhew not the Proper and adequate ſubject of Baptiſme, but the ſucceſs and Power of

the Gospel; that, notwithstanding there seem'd to be in Christian Religion so many absurd and unlikely things, yet in very deed such reasonableness as well as power was in the dispensation, that so many thousands of Men and Women, come to *mature* years and judgement, and *some* of them the greatest and most judicious Scholars of the times, did yet very readily and deliberately engage in it, in the ordinary way.

5. Whereas the main things, that ye so much vaunt of, and stand upon, are these two, your personall professing and Covenanting; both these (suppose it were lawfull for every man to choose, which way he will go, whether ours or yours every sober Christian sure would choose to have his Children doe, in our way, rather then in yours; because they may be done, if not better and sooner, yet *as soone* and *as well*, in *our* way *as* in yours. For, whereas the time, that ye would have young Ones admitted to Baptisme, is then, when they are come to be of so perfect age, as to be able *understandingly* to professe, and *seriously* to engage; at this very point of time, our Church (according to Apostolicall Institution and practise) hath ordered all such adult to be presented to the Bishop for Confirmation, and after that to be admitted to the Holy Communion, and *not* before. And whether ratifying and confirming their Baptismall vow, openly before the Church, with their own mouth and of their own accord, together with all these venerable and weighty circumstances, that are or ought to be used and stood upon at the time in order to their being confirmed, and admitted unto the Holy Commuion, be not like to work as much upon them, and as much to prevent unworthy receiving, as would at the same time their professing & covenanting, in order to their being admitted to Holy Baptisme; let any one Judge, that hath but once seen that ordinance dispensed (a) So gravely, so seriously, & so severely as it ought to be. So that the whole question, as to this point of Covenanting and Professing, is now come to this issue; whether a Baptized Child, 15. years old, may not Covenant as heartily and truely with his God as an unbaptized Child of the same age and gifts? No man sure of ordinary Capacity, can be much to seek, which part of the Question to take. Adde hereunto, that once already it hath been sufficiently made out, and, if need be, may be again, that „ by this Apostolicall ordinance of Confirmation worthily administred, every Bishop in his Diocesse, in all likelyhood, shall „ have really gained engag'd unto Iesus Christ more by farre in two „, or three moneths, then all the Preachers of the Country, put'em all together, shall have „ done by their Preaching, throughout the *whole* year. So great encouragement is there, „ and so great an Obligation lies there, *upon* and *unto* all Parents, naturall as well as Ec„ clesiasticall; whatever heretofore they have done, never any more, to be slight and Per„ functory in this part of Paternall care and relation.
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(a) *Augustè, curatè, severè as the Non Bishop of Sarum, hath most happily expressed the matter, in his Latine preface, to* D. Hammonds *Latine Treatise of Confirmation.*

6. Those words in S. Paul, else your Children *are* unclean, but now they *are* Holy; seem to be direct and home for Infant Baptisme. For the true meaning of them is this sure; else your Children *are* or *remain* Un-baptized, but now they are *Baptized*. For, all other Interpretations are resisted by the Scope of the Apostle, or some other weighly considerations; such as this.

The Holyness, that the Apostle here speaks of, is a Holyness proper to the Infants of believing Parents (of *one* side, at least:) But now no Holyness is proper to such, save onely the *Relative Holyness*, of being dedicated to God and Holyness by Baptisme: Therefore this is the Holyness here meant by the Apostle; And, *Holy*, here as much as *Baptized*, or, Dedicated to God and the Holy Christian Religion by Baptisme.

Adde hereunto, That in the Inſcriptions of the Epiſtles, *Holy*, ſeems to be uſed *altogether* in this power. For what *other* Holynes may be affirmed of all the members of a Church viſible, beſides this *Relative*, of being Dedicated to God and the Holy Chriſtian Religion by Holy Baptiſme? *Rom.* 1. 7. 1 *Cor.* 1. 2. 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. *Epheſ.* 1. 1. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Coloſſ.* 1. 1. Compared with *Epheſ.* 5. 26. That he might ſanctify and cleanſe it, *with* the waſhing (or, by the laver) of water (*in* the Word, or) *by* the Word; that is, That he might ſanctify & ſeparate the whole Catholique Church to himſelf and Purify by Baptiſme, as that comprehends. 1. The ſacred Ceremony of Baptiſmal waſhing. 2. The Word, or, The Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, or, The true Chriſtian Religion; *Into which*, through *or in* the power of the promiſes thereof, and the obligation therein laid upon Parents, ſo to devote their Children as well as themſelves, They are in very deed Baptized and engaged; And *by which*, *having* the ſecret powerfull aſſiſtances of the Spirit and Grace alwayes accompaning it, They are enabled to live *Holyly*, that is, according to the Intention of God, in cauſing them to be thus ſanctified and ſeparated to himſelf and Purity, by the Laver of Baptiſme

Two Prolepſes, or Anticipations.

The former, this; not, but that, *Holy*, or *Saints*, in other places ſignifies otherwiſe; But that in theſe places, and 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. This is that power, which is moſt agreable.

The other, this; The Holyneſs, called fœderall, or, of ſpeciall ſeparation to God being fitted to the bottom, is found to be nothing, but this Relative; if not *formally*, yet *fundamentally*, namely, when Children are born ſuch, as by the Covenant of Grace, have a *Right* to be made *viſible Church-members* (or, *To be ſanctified and ſeparated to God and Holyneſs*) by the Laver of Baptiſme, and in due time are Actually treated, according to this their Native morall-right.

A Submonition, or Item.

Though Fœderall Holyneſs (in the Nature of the Word) may ſignify the *Right or Ground* of being Baptized, as well as the *being actually Baptized*; as one would ſay, the Relative Holyneſs *fundamentally*, as well as the Relative Holyneſs *formally*; Yet *this* and not *that*, is that, which ſeems moſt agreable to this *happy* place, 1 *Cor.* 7. 14.

Laſtly, whereas ye are, many of you, againſt all ſet formes of Prayer; To all thoſe unanſwered, and indeed un-anſwerable, Juſtifications of them, that heretofore and of late have been given out, adde but this one Conſideration, ſo eaſy to every willing, though but very mean, underſtanding; namely,

That, whereas the great Ends of Prayer *Common* to two or three or more, whether in Church or family, are theſe two, to Act and Teſtify our dependance on God, and our Communion of Saints (theſe two, believing in God with all the Heart, and perfect charity, being the things, that, for the new Covenants ſake in Chriſt, will doe any thing with Him and his Father;) When once ye have rid your hearts of all prejudices, and, by Grace, have brought them to that evennes, equity and indifferency to both ſides, that is neceſſary; we ſhall then make no queſtion, but, upon your due and ſufficient experience both of the one and of the other way, ye will your ſelves acknowledge, that theſe two great graces,

graces, may not onely be *teſtified*, but *acted* alſo, and that God may be worſhipped in *Spirit and in truth* (in the true ſenſe of the Words) much more ſurely and *effectually*, when all the Company aforehand know what Prayers and praiſes, they are to offer up to God, and alſo doe fully approve of the matter of them, then, when it is, as amongſt moſt of you, clean otherwiſe: as much as to ſay; when believers have nothing to doe, but to fix their minders, and to draw out their devotion; Whether in all reaſon, they may not doe this much more certainly, having but this one thing to look to: then, when they have another care beſides this, much more difficult *for* them, though if performed never ſo well, nothing neer ſo pleaſing *to* Almighty God, namely, For the *mouth* of the Company to be, beſides *ſteady* in his cogitations, *fit and proper* alſo in his expreſſions; and for all the Company, to ſee, that their underſtanding *of*, and paſſing judgement *upon*, his Elocution, doe not *diſturb and interrupt* their Heavenly mindednesſe and devotion. Whether, I ſay, both Speaker and Hearers, be like to anſwer theſe *two* cares better, then onely one of theſe, your ſelves give ſentence.

And indeed ſomewhat the more confidently doe we make you your ſelves the Judges in your own cauſe, becauſe of this late not un-conſiderable providence; namely, that one there is, who, being both very able and very upright and having, till about four years ſince, gone on very farre in your way, has now at laſt, after due and long trying of yours and *all* wayes, given up his moſt deliberate Judgement, as to this Matter, in theſe words;

„If believers, *writes He*, were but once *provided*, and as it were, *ſtock't* with ſo much „faith and Heavenly mindedneſſe, as to deſire to act and exerciſe their own *Infuſed graces in every* Prayer and praiſe and Worſhipping out of the word of God, as God himſelf, rather then to *hear* others to act and exercile their *acquired gifts*, in *making* Prayers and Propheſyings and Preachings *upon* and *out of* that Word; if once they would but prevail with themſelves to lay a ſide certain vulgar errours, ſuch as theſe, that in things of difficulty is the greateſt excellency, That ſure and eaſy wayes of Worſhip, cannot be the *truſt* and righteſt wayes of Worſhip; that, becauſe ſome *caſts* of Men and Preachers doe require things of them, which they can *very hardly*, if *at all*, perform up to the rule, that is ſet them, therefore *theſe* ſure doe ſhew the *narrow* and *hard* way of life, the moſt truely and uprightly of any; In one word, that hard and hazardous venerations, are the moſt Heavenly and Holy venerations: If people would but perſwade themſelves, what is truth, That theſe errours are as *groſſe* as they are *generall*, and, being obeyed to the uttermoſt, *as killing and pernicious*, as they are *plauſible and catching*; It would not then be long, but, by the holy and happy experience both *of* themſelves *and* others, they would conclude *with* themſelves, That, as in diet the ſimpleſt and plaineſt victuals is alwayes the moſt wholeſome and healthy; and as in curing the body, *Parabilia Remedia*, as oft as we can hit on them, that is, remedies at hand and cheap and ſuch as every one may have, are found to be the beſt and moſt effectuall: ſo alſo in cheriſhing the Soul, that way of publick Worſhip, wherein every one that will, may *joyn* in tongue and in geſture, outwardly (*Pſal.* 95. 2. & 35. 28 & 63. Verſ. 4. 5. 6. &c) as well as in deed and in truth, „inwardly, Is that certes, which is like to be moſt acceptable to God, by how much the „more ſuitable it is to what ſoever degrees and conditions of the *People of God*.

To this, adde; 1. That the gift of Prayer (as they, that are moſt eminently endowed with it, will readily acknowledge) is not a boon dropt into the Soul from Heaven, entirely, Immediatly, by extraordinary favour, and in one inſtant; and ſo one ſure Argument of a mighty power of grace and of the Spirit in all thoſe in whom it appears (as moſt ſimple people by little and little have been brought to think); But a very acquiſition of In-

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duſtry, time, and unwearied Practiſe, as Preaching is.

2ly. That the main parts of it, are, theſe three:

1ly. Confidence; gotten by venturing, long uſe, ſucceſſes and encouragements from acquaintance and others, as well as from God. Second; The ſupervening preſence, or, quickenings, ſtrengthnings and ſecret heartnings of the Spirit; obtained by lifting up the heart aforehand for them, by reſolving to goe forth in the ſtrength of the Lord God, by teaching the *greater* cares for ſaying and doing what may be moſt pleaſing to God and moſt profitable to the hearers, to drive out theſe *leſſer*, concerning Applauſe and cenſure, and by deſpairing of any ſucceſſe worth ſpeaking of, unleſs He, in his ſtill but effectuall way, doe, in the very Act, ſupply us, minutely, with Aides, Divine, ſudain and as yet not appearing. Third part; a magazine of Scripture, expreſſions for all occaſions (ſuch as, be thou our arm every morning; cauſe us to take hold of thy ſtrength &c.) laid up in the memory, and, after much uſe, offering themſelves upon occaſion, eſpecially if we have had time aforehand, by meditation to rub them up, and to range and diſpoſe of them in our minds, as we conceive to be moſt decent and affecting. (for ſo certainly, even the moſt able of us doe alwaies deſire ſome time for our preparation, eſpecially if the occaſion be more ſolemne then ordinary, That, they that make as though they doe not ſo deſire, doe but deceive and cheat the credulous, as well, as deſile and abuſe their own ſoules.)

3ly That one of the ableſt defenders of the Way of the Directory, being preſſed on every ſide by a moſt able Opponent, at laſt very ingeniouſly gave out his very beſt defence; This namely, That he ſaw no reaſon but Miniſters ſhould be engaged to *Study* for their *Prayers* as for *their Sermons*. Thereby plainly acknowledging, That they are the Leaſurely products of Humane ſtudy, and not only ſudaine Injections of Divine Operation.

4ly That the Spirit of Grace and Supplications *Zech.* 12. 10. is *there* ſignifyed to conſiſt in looking at Him, whom we have pierced and in mourning for him, and for our ſinnes, that brought him into that mournfull condition; as one would ſay, In *Acting* faith and Repentance rather then in *uttering* fit expreſſions about and of them. And ſo we *alwaies* have *Teat* about us, though we *never* have *This*; albeit our credit haply may be leſſe among ſome men, yet our Comfort ſhall not, before the God of them, and of us, and of All. For ſo great and happy a difference is there between the ſpirit of Prayer, and the gift of Prayer, That, As the latter very frequently is without the former, namely, in many Learned Heads and good Wits, but unſanctified: ſo alſo the former is as frequently without the latter, in many poore unlettered, but very devout, and humble, and true believing ſoules. Not that we are to take no care, or to make little eſteeme of the Gift; But that in Prayer the maine thing we look to and after, be not the Gift of Prayer, but the Spirit of Prayer. All the other Texts, that by ſome have been applied to this matter, that is, To aſſerting the Neceſſity of the Praying Gift, are found to be as unconcluding and wide from It, as this in *Zechariè* appears to bee.

5ly: That one great miſchiefe of the late tying all Miniſters in Publick, *to Praying* by the Spirit, or, at leaſt to *Pretending* ſo to doe, has been this; That thereby many Godly good-meaning Chriſtians have come to miſ-perſwade themſelves, that All ſet formes of Prayer, are not only *uneffectuall*, but *unlawfull* too. And ſo in their reſpective families, have ſet themſelves to variety and effuſions, moſt-what ſo very unhappy and unbecoming, that the end has been, the great diſlike, Regrette, and Bluſhing not only of Friends, Children and Servants, but alſo of themſelves too. Nay hence, that greater miſchiefe alſo; namely, When they ſaw they could not worthily keep up their

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Family-devotions by the Gift, have kept it up no Way at all, but have let it wholly ſink: to the great diſhonour of God and Religion, and to the great decay of Faith and Piety both in themſelves and Houſholds.

6ly That for theſe Miniſters, that in very deed have the gift in any meaſure, They may uſe, and if they think it lawfull, form it too, not onely in their families, but in the Congregation alſo, in their Prayer before Sermon. And theſe two open exerciſes of it, together with that of the cloſet (the moſt proper place of all *for* it) may in all reaſon be thought ſcope enough for the gift to walk in at pleaſure; without encroching and growing upon thoſe other times and places, which due authority has otherwiſe determined of. Eſpecially, when now that is by moſt granted which is moſt true, that God may, if not more earneſtly, yet as earneſtly be ſought and wraſtled with, by forms as by the gift.

7ly That to be ſo zealous for the honour, and uſe of a *pure Humane* acquiſition, as, for it, to venture upon violating a *Divine* command, namely, That for obedience and ſubmiſſion to due authority, ſeems a hardineſs ſavouring as little of prudence and ſound diſcretion, as it does of faith and true Religion.

8ly That, if a man pray never ſo readily and devoutly by the gift, yet to *Him* onely it is gift, *but* to all the *company* form, for as much tied and ſtinted all they ſeem to be by *His* words, as they would be, if they were the words *of a Book*. And hence comes it, that praying by the gift, has been moſt reaſonably deemed to be much more fit for the cloſet, then for the Church, or Parlour. For, in theſe, *to the* reſpective companies, it ceaſeth to be *gift*, and comes to be *form*; and ſo had as good be very form, known and acknowledged ſo to be. Becauſe, in very deed, never a whit the leſſe is it, what it is, for pretending to be otherwiſe.

9ly If any ſay, they find by experience, they can be much more devout and enlarged, when they hear a man praying by the gift, then in and by a form; We anſwer, this comes to paſſe generally, becauſe great prejudice they have *againſt* the one, and greateſt kindneſs *for* the other way. But let them be but upright and unbended in their opinions, and then, as but now was hinted, upon and after due experience, find they will the clean contrary.

To conclude, as to the whole, doe but honeſtly conſider, that there is no end of diſputing and arguing pro and con. That, if a man will ſet himſelf about it, Hee may have ſome thing or other, to ſay againſt any thing whatſoever; That the *Itch* of reaſoning, has proved the very *ſcab* of Religion: And therefore, if in very deed we doe deſire to keep the ſpark of faith a live in our hearts, one great care for all time coming will ſure be this, to deny our ſelves in our boldneſs of queſtioning every thing, that we can and have a mind to; and, when that, which ſeems to be truth, is held out to us, preſently to admit and embrace it, though never ſo contrary to our former, whether practiſes or prepoſſeſſions.

And now, Brethren, theſe 2. Things, the grounddedneſs of the way ye are perſwaded to, & the unjuſtifiableneſs of that ye are perſwaded from, ſimply & ſincerely being laid to heart; ye will, we hope, now at laſt be very *fain* upon that great Legacy of Unity & concord that our Lord ſo near his death, ſo earneſtly bequeathed unto us; and alſo take effectuall care, That in this our dear & Native Country, That heavenly prayer of our dying Lord may not in vain be poured out *upon* and *for* us, Namely, *That they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,* [εἰς ἓν, into or in one thing

ormied,] *and that the World may know, that thou hast sent me.* Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly.

Dear Brethren, your most affectionate and daily Servant at the throne of grace,

Saturday Octob. *the* 4. 1662.

G. P.

F I N I S.